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'Deficiencies'--The Rebuke to Secret Service and FBI

Probers Hint That Better Liaison Might Have Prevented Tragedy

Hearst Headline Service
Special to The N. Y. Journal-American
By LESLIE H. WHITTEN

WASHINGTON, Sept. 28.—Both the FBI and the Secret Service were under a virtual mandate today to tighten up their security procedures and begin working together more closely when protecting the life of the President.

While neither agency was held responsible for the death of President Kennedy in Dallas last Nov. 22, both came under sweeping criticism in the Warren Commission report for failing to coordinate their information and activities on the day of the assassination.

The Warren report even suggested that had there been a closer liason between the Secret Service and the FBI, Lee Harvey Oswald, the accused killer, might have been under scrutiny that day, and prevented rom firing the fatal shots.

KNEW BACKGROUND

Neither agency knew at the time that Oswald had tried to kill former Maj. Gen. Edwin Walker, but the FBI knew of Oswald's defection to Russia, his pro-Castro tendencies, his hostility to the United States, his trip to Mexico and the fact that he had a job in a building along the President's motorcade route.

Warren Commission

A real debunking of the FBI which we will never live down.

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"All of these (facts), if we had them together, would have added up to pointing out a pretty bad individual," Secret Service official Robert L. Bouck told the Commission, "and I think that together hd we known he had a vantage point would have seemed somewhat serious to us."

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover sprang to the defense of his organization, however, telling the Commission "there was nothing up to the time of the assassination that gave any indication that this man was a dangerous character who might do harm to the President or the Vice President."

BOTH CRITICIZED

The Warren Commission singled out the Secret Service for being "seriously deficient" in its intelligence work, and the FBI for taking "an unduly restrictive view of its role" in failing to give Secret Service agents information on Oswald.

The Commission also cited "a breach of discipline" by nine members of the Secret Service in Fort Worth. The agents had up to three beers and a mixed drink and a half after midnight.

One stayed out until 5 a.m., Nov. 22. The report said there was no evidence these men could have averted the tragedy, but that "it is conceivable (they) might have been more alert in the Dallas motorcade."

Four American presidents in 100 years have been shot to death, the report noted: Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, William McKinley and John P. Kennedy.

But the President's "very position as representative of the people prevents him from effectively shielding himself from the people. He cannot and will not take the precautions of a dictator . . ."

- A cabinet-level committee to oversee the Secret Service and other Federal agencies in their protection of a President. The committee might study whether protection should be removed from the Secret Service and put elsewhere.
- To make assassination, assault or plots against the President and Vice-President a Federal crime.
- A "complete overhaul" of Secret Service facilities to detect possible assassins before they can act. The most advanced data-processing machines, more personnel and funds, and markedly increased cooperation with the FBI, State Dept., CIA and others were urged.

Against this background of limited protection possibilities, however, the report still found troubling inadequacies in the Secret Service and to a lesser extent, the FBI.

The Secret Service, an arm of the Treasury Dept., which has protected Presidents since 1894, had only 12 specialists and three clerks in its Protective Research Section on Nov. 22. Their job was to keep tabs on all who might be a danger to the President.

Of the 400 indiiduals under regular surveillance, only 100 were seen as serious risks and 12 to 15 as highly dangerous. Although Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had been assaulted in Dallas the month before, no names in in the Fort Worth-Dallas this Secret Service file were area, the report asserted.

It was in this crucial area of advance warnings that the breakdown occurred, said the Warren group. Although the FBI, the State Dept., the CIA, and Navy intelligence all had files on Oswald, none of them had tipped off the Secret Service he might be a danger.

Dallas FBI Agent James P. Hosty Jr. had such a file on Oswald, had learned 18 days before thae assassination that he worked in the Texas School Book Depository and had heard 17 days before that he was a "Trotskyite Communist."

But he testified that even if he had remembered that the President's route led past the depository building, he would not have cited him to the Secret Service as a threat.

Mr. Hosty swore he had no reason to think Oswald would kill the President, although a Dallas police lieutenant contradicted him in saying Mr. Hosty told him after the assassination that the FBI had information Oswald was capable of the killing.

DEFEND AGENT

Both J. Edgar Hoover and his assistant, Alan H. Belmont, defended Mr. Hosty. But the Commission found "the FBI took an unduly restrictive view of its responsibilities in preventive intelligence work."

The report conceded the Secret Service's "request" to Federal agencies for tips were "vague," but it made this conclusion:

"There was much knowledge in the hands of the FBI about Oswald; the knowledge of his arrogance and hostility to the United States, his pro-Castro tendencies, his lies when interrogated by the FBI, his trip to Mexico where he was in contact with Soviet authorities, his presence in the School Book Depository job and its location along the route of the motorcade.

"All this does seem to amount to enough to have induced an alert agency, such as the FBI . . . to list Oswald as a potential threat to the safety of the President."

The Warren group said the Secret Service's policy of not checking out buildings along a Presidential motorcade route and its watch on buildings from the street were "inadequate" and should be amended.

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Secret Service Chief